



## What It Takes to be a Great ETC

Pam McInnes, Employee Transportation Coordinator for Washington State Department of Transportation, has definite ideas of what provides results at her worksites when it comes to getting employees to consider other options to driving alone. Pam has been the ETC for nearly two years, coming to the job with a degree in Social Sciences and a background working as an assistant buyer for Nordstrom and an employee at the Washington State Ferries.

"My biggest challenge when I started the job was to get to know who was participating in the WSDOT transportation program," said Pam. To better understand who was riding in the vanpools, Pam required the bookkeeper in each van to provide her a copy of the bookkeeper's monthly report and a tracking sheet to show the percentage of time each person rode in the vanpool per month. "This enabled me to identify who was participating the required 60% per month to receive their \$50 subsidy, but more importantly, I could immediately see when ridership was down," Pam shared.

As soon as she knew the group needed riders she encouraged the van to check for ridesharing at [RideshareOnline.com](http://RideshareOnline.com) or she checked a file she kept of employees by zip code who she knew were looking for a carpool or vanpool. By having special access as an ETC to names of WSDOT employees in [RideshareOnline.com](http://RideshareOnline.com), she could easily go on the Internet to check for potential matches as well.

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***"Make it fun,  
network and  
be a commute  
resource."***

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"Make it fun" was Pam's next piece of advice and perhaps her most important recommendation to other ETCs. "If you can capture the employees attention at transportation events or through transportation bulletin boards, you can more easily engage them in discussions about their commute options," she explains.

As is true for most ETCs, Pam does not have a large budget for her two annual events or bulletin board displays during the year. However, she has come up with inexpensive ways to attract participation at

transportation events using attractive displays and incentives.

"When I am planning a transportation event, I think of the theme for the event, such as the Fall Rideshare Week film

theme. I purchased bulk quantities of microwave popcorn that I spread on the tables with other tempting treats and transportation materials," Pam explained. Her use of good communication prior to the event ensured that many employees visited the table to talk to Pam and other transit agency staff who were present.

Pam has visited the Goodwill and the Dollar Store to find items for gift baskets she wraps up with cellophane as prizes at events. Themes for the baskets are commute related, using items such as pencils, calculators, piggy banks, highlighter, bookmarks, and crossword puzzle books. For transportation bulletin boards, she has ironed on photos of employees who rideshare onto tee shirts she then displays with vanpool or carpool riders wanted signs. She sometimes wears tee shirts to get her point across – one read, "I've got really good news" on the front and "I saved by vanpooling" on the back.

Network, network, network is another big must she considers to be critically important to her job as ETC. She takes the time to chat with employees in the hallway to get to know them and to gain recognition for her role as ETC.

What is most impressive about what all Pam has done in her year and a half position as ETC is her results! When she started in 2002, there were 140 participants out of 1,600 employees registered for vanpool or transit. Today there are 415 registered participants, which also includes carpoolers as a result of a carpool subsidy program she started and VanShares, a new program that provides the final link to or from the ferry dock, park and ride or train station.

Pam loves to talk about her role as ETC and her ideas for the future, such as applying with the City of Shoreline for a WSDOT Commuter Trip Reduction Performance grants to help augment her program. If you would like to talk to Pam about some of her innovative approaches to promoting alternatives to driving alone, you can contact her by phone at 206-440-4107 or by email at [mcinnep@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:mcinnep@wsdot.wa.gov). ❖



**Pam McInnes – WSDOT ETC**

### *Inside this issue:*

- **Vanpool Profile – Thirty-five riders**
- **Need Riders – Call Metro**
- **New 11 Passenger Vans**
- **Does Your Vanpool Have a Story to Tell?**

## ***New 11-Passenger Vans – Designed For Comfort***

Get ready to ride in style. Metro is pleased to announce the arrival of a fleet of 56 'comfort sized' 11-passenger vans. Built on the chassis of a standard Ford XLT 12-passenger van, the new vans feature a customized interior. When they arrive, the new vans will replace the 1998 Dodge 12-passenger vans currently in operation.



Over the years, you let us know that the rear bench in 12-passenger vans was just too tight for practical use. The new 11-passenger configuration addresses that problem in several ways. Featuring access through a center aisle, the rear bench has three full-sized seats, instead of the current four in the 12-passenger design. Also, every single seat has armrests and a silhouette style high-back to provide greater comfort and increased neck and head support. With individual seats that are roomier than both the Chevy and Dodge vans, the new Fords will be the ideal van for groups with too many riders for an eight-passenger van but not enough to fill a 12-passenger van.

The new vans will be arriving in the coming months and, after they are outfitted with logos, should be cycled into the fleet shortly thereafter.

So, if your group has ever considered adding riders to lower individual fares but hesitated because of space concerns, now is the time to make the move. Call Metro today at 206-625-4500 and we'll be happy to help you recruit-in, trade-up and ride-on! ❖



## ***Need Riders? Call Metro***

To help you keep your van running at its best, our team has loads of resources and recruiting tips to give you. You just give us the word and we'll go to work right away.

Do you have a possible rider who is interested but just not ready to commit? We'll send you some free ride tickets so they can try the van out. Good for up to three FREE trips, riders can use them to see just how easy – and good – it is to vanpool to work.

Want to find riders in your area? Visit [www.RideshareOnline.com](http://www.RideshareOnline.com) and create a ridematch for yourself. Don't have time or Internet access? Simply give us a call and we'll send you one. We can also send you Riders Wanted Flyers so you can let others know you're looking for riders. Metro even has a great network of employers who are looking for vanpools for their employees to join. We'll send your flyer to them too.

Those are just a few of the ways we can help you keep your van full. But we can't help you if you don't let us know. Just give us a call at 206-625-4500 to get us started recruiting for you. ❖

## ***Weekday Classes for New Drivers***

Have you ever had to scramble for a ride to work because your vanpool driver was sick or unavailable? Does your group want to start sharing driving responsibility among all the riders? Would you like to drive the van occasionally but can't make a Saturday class?

Metro knows Saturday classes don't work for everyone. That's why they have a variety of Wednesday afternoon and evening classes every quarter to help new drivers get on the road. Short and convenient, the Redmond classes are held from 5:00 to 8:30 in the evening and the Federal Way classes are held from 12:30 to 4:00 in the afternoon.

Don't pay for a van that sits without a driver. You can even get your entire van together and have everyone become backup drivers. And, multiple drivers make for stronger groups. Everyone gets a break and the van never has a reason to sit idle. In addition, most vanpool drivers may be eligible to use the van to run errands during lunch or on the weekend!

Leave your car at home and keep your van on the road where it belongs. Give your Vanpool Representative a call today for a driver application. You might even be able to get one from your bookkeeper. Fill it out, send it in and Metro will take care of the rest. ❖

### **Dates for upcoming weekday classes**

May 12 – Wed. Afternoon, Federal Way

May 26 – Wed. Evening, Redmond

June 9 – Wed. Evening, Redmond

# Thirty-five riders. Two eight-passenger vanpools. One mission: Get to work

Through the art of “overbooking”, or having more riders than seats available, HOVs 8361 and 9305 share 35 riders between Queen Anne and Microsoft. By overbooking their vans, these groups are able to maintain full ridership on a regular basis while offering their riders lower fares and the flexibility of their own commute schedule.

One of the greatest recruiting benefits to vanpooling for these two Microsoft groups has been flexibility in work schedule. Cathee Kneeling of HOV 9305 said that it is easy for her to recruit riders for her van because there is “no need to commit to vanpooling everyday.” Marianne Sweeny of HOV 8361 concurs; because these vans share similar stops, yet different schedules, it allows the riders the flexibility in choosing which van works best for them.

Riders reserve a spot in one of these groups, or two others, through an online sign-up form on Microsoft’s Intranet. Riders select the van

they are interested in and can look to see if there is room available. If there is no room in the van of their choice, the rider can be placed on a waiting list. But, to encourage riders to become back-up drivers, Metro approved drivers have priority over a rider in any given van.

“We share this system and riders with three other vans that originate in the



*These 4 rode today...the other 31 ride other days” (Front row: Marianne Sweeny, Sara Norman, Back Row: Bill Gallagher, Lisa Toftemark)*

Queen Anne area,” says Cathee. “If a rider needs to go in at their regular time in our van and go home later in Marianne’s van, they can”.

“Occasionally we will get people that will show up at our meeting spot in hopes for a ride,” says Marianne. “If there is room, great – if not, they understand that they have to take the bus in.”

In a more traditional overbooking scenario, as shared by over 150 other King County Metro Vanpools, Tracy Chellis and HOV 203529 employ a calendar for their 13 riders in their 12-

passenger van. Because the van serves 9 different employers in downtown Seattle from the Kitsap Peninsula, setting up an electronic system that everyone could access would be difficult.

“Having the calendar allows us to have more people in the van and lower each person’s fare,” says Tracy. “On the rare occasion that all 13 people try to

ride at the same time, we have an agreement that the last person will take the bus or borrow a person from the van to carpool to the ferry.”

So how do these vans acquire their extra riders? Through tried and true methods of recruiting. **Rideshare Online.com** has been the recruiting tool of choice for Tracy and her group. While Cathee has had excellent response from Riders Wanted Flyers posted around Microsoft’s campus, Marianne relies on her riders to do the work.

“I haven’t had to post a Riders Wanted Flyer in about eight months,” says Marianne. “Most of our new riders come solely from word-of-mouth. While some riders may be leery of the van at first, they are quickly converted once they ride, especially when the Mariners are in town and we can save 45 minutes on our commute.”

Overbooking a van allows groups like Tracy’s to ensure they have enough riders to receive Preferential Loading on the ferries. It also allows groups like Cathee’s and Marianne’s to use the 3-person HOV lanes on SR-520. However, overbooking a van is not without its challenges.

“Managing ridership each day is the biggest drawback to (overbooking),” says Cathee. “While we send an email out each day to everyone that is riding the next day, the trick is remembering who we have to pick up on the morning”.

If you are interested in help with oversubscribing your vanpool, contact 206-625 4500 or 1-800-427-8249 for rider recruitment assistance. Or, visit **RideshareOnline.com**. ♦

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## Meet The Newest Rideshare Operations Staff...

### **Jan Dahl – Vanpool Account Representative**

Jan Dahl is the latest addition to Rideshare Operation's accounting group. Her duties include assisting bookkeepers with monthly reporting, and training new drivers and bookkeepers as an instructor at vanpool orientation classes. Her many years of experience as a Recreation Programs Coordinator provided her with strong customer service skills as well as experience in coordination of training and educational programs. Jan enjoys travel and some creative writing in her "off hours," and tries to escape to the ocean for storm watching as often as possible. Jan is a welcome addition to the Rideshare staff. ♦



*Laird Chambers and Jan Dahl are Rideshare's latest staff additions*

### **Laird Chambers – Administrative Specialist**

Laird is the newest addition to our Rideshare Operations staff. He is new to transit, having come over from King County Parks after 24 years as an Aquatics manager. He lives in Auburn with his wife and two sons. As a native of Washington, he enjoys the outdoors and planting his tomatoes each spring. Laird is also a welcome addition to the Rideshare staff. ♦

## Cities Reward Commuters

As if commuting by vanpool isn't rewarding enough, the cities of Bellevue and Redmond have gone online to link vanpoolers and other HOV commuters to special financial rewards.

Both cities launched web sites last year to test HOV participation calendars and to distribute awards to HOV commuters.



Redmond's R-TRIP program launched R-Rewards to reward commuters who carpool, bike and/or walk to work in Redmond. This commuter club rewards these commuters with points toward a \$50 MasterCard Gift Card.

Vanpools in Redmond have their own special offer. New vanpoolers are eligible for a \$50 incentive each month for six months. Existing vanpoolers can receive their own \$35 MasterCard Gift Card just for recruiting a new rider into a Redmond vanpool. Visit [www.GORtrip.com](http://www.GORtrip.com) or call 425-702-8001, Ext. 202 for details.

Bellevue's Club R, rewards Downtown Bellevue workers for commuting any way other than alone in their car. Club R members reported their daily commute modes via an online Commuter Update calendar each month. Members who chose to not drive alone at least 40% of their work shifts were eligible for monthly and quarterly drawings valued up to \$200. Over 800 commuters joined Club R and Bellevue may extend the program. ♦

## Does Your Vanpool Have a Story to Tell?

Send us a story about what makes your vanpool unique in some way and qualify for a \$50 MasterCard gift card reward if your story is chosen to be printed in VanPool Voices. Some examples of topics could be your rider recruitment strategies, relationships that have been forged within the group, longevity of the group, what keeps you vanpooling, how you work your vanpool commute with your employer, just to name a few ideas.

We will offer two runner up \$25 MasterCard gift cards rewards for second and third place and use these stories in future VanPool Voices newsletters. Entries for this contest are due by August 1, 2004. Send your stories to VanPool Voices, King County Metro, YES-TR-0700, 400 Yesler Way, Seattle WA 98104 or email them to [vanpool.information@metrokc.gov](mailto:vanpool.information@metrokc.gov). ♦

### **VANPOOL VOICES**

**If you have questions, comments or story ideas, send them to: Rideshare Operations, YES-TR-0700, King County Metro, 400 Yesler Way, Seattle WA 98104, call (206) 263-4445 or write [cathy.blumenthal@metrokc.gov](mailto:cathy.blumenthal@metrokc.gov).**

*On our website:  
VanPool Riders Wanted Bulletin  
<http://transit.metrokc.gov>*

**[www.RideshareOnline.com](http://www.RideshareOnline.com)**